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# Reconnaissance in Force: A Key Contributor to Tempo

A Monograph  
by  
Major Robert G. Fix  
Infantry

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School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

First Term AY 92-93

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MONOGRAPH

RECONNAISSANCE IN FORCE: A KEY CONTRIBUTOR  
TO TEMPO

MAJ ROBERT G. FIX

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES

ATTN: AT&L-SWV

FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS 66027-6900

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## ABSTRACT

RECONNAISSANCE IN FORCE: A KEY CONTRIBUTOR TO TEMPO.  
by MAJ Robert G. Fix, USA, 55 pages.

Tempo is a key characteristic of offensive operations. It is the means by which the attacker keeps the defender off balance and prevents him from taking effective countermeasures. In the attack, reconnaissance units are key to gathering intelligence and developing the situation necessary for exploiting enemy weaknesses and keeping him off balance. The reconnaissance in force, by definition, is a means for obtaining this type of information and influencing the enemy's capability to fight. Since its inclusion in the 1939 version of FM 100-5, Operations, the reconnaissance in force has undergone significant changes in purpose and design. The latest version of FM 100-5 includes some significant changes to the reconnaissance in force and introduces tempo as a key characteristic of offensive operations.

This monograph examines the reconnaissance in force as a primary contributor in maintaining tempo during offensive operations. It begins with an analysis of tempo as addressed by classical and contemporary theorists. From this analysis, the paper derives a definition of tempo and identifies the criteria necessary for creating and maintaining tempo. It then traces the development of the reconnaissance in force from both the U.S. Army's perspective and the Soviet perspective. The paper then outlines and examines two historical examples which illustrate the use of reconnaissance in forces to create and maintain tempo.

The monograph concludes that the reconnaissance in force can create the conditions necessary for gaining and maintaining tempo. It recommends that current doctrine be expanded to reinforce the use of reconnaissance in force during mobile operations as well as during the preparation phase of offensive operations.

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by  
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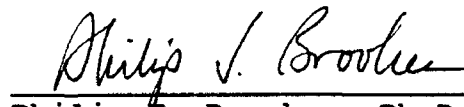
Major Robert G. Fix

Title of Monograph: Reconnaissance in Force: A Key Contributor to Tempo.

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
LTC William J. Tetu Monograph Director

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Colonel James R. McDonough, M.S. Director, School of  
Advanced Military  
Studies

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D. Director, Graduate  
Degree Program

FORM 10-1 (REV. 10-1-80)

Accepted this 9th day of December 1992

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## I. Introduction

They called the operation a "Reconnaissance in Force," a term used to minimize disappointment over the failure of an attack.<sup>1</sup>

This quote by Ned Russell in Springboard to Berlin typifies how the U.S. Army viewed reconnaissance in force operations in 1943. Much has changed in the intervening years. Since its inclusion in the 1939 version of Operations, reconnaissance in force has undergone numerous changes in purpose and design. Although it is still defined as a limited objective operation, the latest version of FM 100-5 emphasizes that when a reconnaissance in force is properly employed it may create the conditions necessary for developing a major offensive operation.<sup>2</sup> This new emphasis is very similar to the Soviet perspective on reconnaissance in force operations which were employed specifically as a means to maintain the tempo of offensive operations.<sup>3</sup>

FM 100-5 has steadily evolved since 1939 and has been the primary driver in changing reconnaissance in force doctrine over the years. The latest version of FM 100-5, the Army's keystone warfighting doctrine, includes several other significant changes. One change in particular is worthy of further discussion and analysis. Reminiscent of Soviet doctrine,



tempo is now included as a key characteristic of offensive operations. Although FM 100-5 does not provide a specific definition, the manual clearly describes the characteristics of high tempo operations and outlines the benefits of operating at a higher tempo than the enemy. In general, the manual describes tempo as the means by which the attacker keeps the defender off balance and prevents the defender from taking effective countermeasures. The doctrine states that the attacker must not sacrifice sound tactics in order to maintain tempo. On the contrary, the attacker must employ appropriate measures to gain and maintain tempo. Furthermore, attacking units maintain tempo by exploiting the success of reconnaissance units and successful probes of the enemy's defenses to widen penetrations, roll up exposed flanks, reinforce success, and strike deep into the enemy's rear.<sup>4</sup> This is the link between tempo and reconnaissance in force operations. By definition, the reconnaissance in force is a means for obtaining information on the enemy's disposition, and for probing enemy defenses for gaps. Current practice, however, indicates that reconnaissance in force is rarely employed at the division and corps level. Since 1988, only one division undergoing a rotation in the Battle Command Training Program has conducted a reconnaissance in force.<sup>5</sup> This raises the key issue of what means divisions and corps have available to gather information and to develop the situation in order to create and maintain a high tempo during offensive operations.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the reconnaissance in force as a primary contributor in maintaining tempo during offensive operations. The paper will determine whether or not the current doctrine for reconnaissance in force is wide enough in scope and whether it should be expanded, clarified, or changed if reconnaissance in force is found to be a primary contributor to tempo. The key to this process is an understanding of tempo. Accordingly, this paper will first analyze tempo from a theoretical perspective. From the analysis of both classical and contemporary military thinkers, a definition of tempo will be derived, and the criteria for creating and maintaining it will be identified. The paper will then trace the development of the U.S. and Soviet reconnaissance in force doctrine, and compare and contrast the doctrinal ways each conducts the reconnaissance in force as a means to achieve tempo. The criteria established in the theoretical analysis of tempo will then be used as the basis for analyzing two historical examples to determine whether reconnaissance in force is a primary contributor in maintaining tempo during offensive operations.

Since reconnaissance in force is a doctrinal mission rarely used at the division and corps level, it is important to define the term and explain how it differs from other similar missions with which it is often confused. The reconnaissance in force is

an offensive operation, a tactical attack.<sup>6</sup> Current Army doctrine defines it in the following terms:

*Reconnaissance in Force:* A limited objective operation conducted to locate and test enemy dispositions, strengths, and reactions. Even though a reconnaissance in force is executed primarily to gather information, the force conducting the operation must seize any opportunity to exploit tactical success. If the enemy situation must be developed along a broad front, the reconnaissance in force may consist of strong probing actions to determine the enemy situation at selected points.<sup>7</sup>

Although this definition contains several elements set forth in the 1939 version of FM 100-5, Operations, it has been expanded and modified over the years. Later on in the paper, the origins and development of the mission will be analyzed to provide a better understanding and perspective for determining whether or not the current definition should be modified and the mission introduced as a specific means for maintaining tempo in the offense.

It is also important to understand the difference between a reconnaissance in force and two missions with which it is often confused: the covering force and the advance guard. Basically, the reconnaissance in force is a *type of attack* whereas the covering force and advance guard are *security missions* given to lead elements of a moving force. A reconnaissance in force may be conducted by a stationary force trying to develop the situation in order to initiate further offensive action or it

may be conducted while the force is on the move. In this regard, a covering force can be given the mission to conduct a reconnaissance in force since it is already organized to fight independently and may be employed to develop the situation and destroy enemy forces.<sup>8</sup> The reconnaissance in force differs significantly from the advance guard which, like the covering force, is also a security force. However, the primary purpose of the advance guard is to operate forward of the main body to ensure the unimpeded movement of the force. Although the advance guard moves as quickly as possible, it differs from the covering force and the reconnaissance in force in that it remains within supporting distance of the main body.<sup>9</sup>

## II. Tempo: An Analysis of Classical and Contemporary Theories

...the attacking forces must never allow themselves to be robbed of the initiative. They must overwhelm the defense with a flood of superior force. By the speed which this superior force is kept in movement and action the countermeasures of the opponent are rendered valueless; the situation is always developing too quickly for these countermeasures to be effective.<sup>10</sup>

As evidenced by F. O. Miksche's analysis of World War II German doctrine, tempo is not a new concept. He correctly identified two key components of tempo which contribute to the overall success of offensive operations, initiative and speed. Many classical and contemporary thinkers have also wrestled

with the idea of tempo as an important characteristic of offensive operations. Like Miksche, classical and contemporary theorists have often addressed tempo without ascribing "tempo" as the one word which manifests their thoughts. Most often, however, their critical analysis revolves around a recognition that combat does not always progress at a steady rate. Instead, the attacker often "must go slower at first, to go faster later."<sup>11</sup> In other words, combat continually cycles through periods of violence and calm, action and inaction, or tension and rest. The principle idea is that combat includes a point along any one of these continuum at which time the action must slow or halt before the intensity can increase. Regulating operations to overcome or at least minimize "pauses" between engagements is an overriding concern addressed by many of these theorists. Today's Army is no exception and it addresses tempo in its emerging doctrine in FM 100-5, Operations. Yet, there still exists a void in the definition of tempo and what criteria are necessary for gaining and maintaining it. The purpose of this section is to examine tempo through an analysis of related work by Carl von Clausewitz, Brigadier Richard E. Simpkin, and several contemporary Soviet writers. From this analysis, a definition of tempo and the criteria necessary for gaining and maintaining it will be derived.

In general terms, tempo is defined as the characteristic rate of an activity or its pace, where pace is the rate of speed at which something advances. Tempo has also been likened to the

speed at which a musical composition is played and a turn in chess in relation to the number of moves required to gain an objective.<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that tempo is not just a measure of how fast something moves or is accomplished. In conjunction with time and space, speed is just one factor of many which combine to produce tempo.

In his work On War, Carl von Clausewitz clearly identifies the idea of tempo although he does not specifically address it as tempo. Clausewitz likens combat in its ideal state to the action of a clock where the continuous and uniform rate of the movement of the hands represent the ideal tempo of combat. In his analysis, Clausewitz identifies men, time, and space as the key components of the essential activity in war, combat.<sup>13</sup> However, in examining the relationship between time and space, he recognizes that the norm during combat is not "unceasing progress," but that breaks in time and space are the norm.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, Clausewitz defines the normal state for armies as either one of action or immobility.<sup>15</sup> He realizes that the realities of war and the frailties of human nature preclude combat from progressing at a steady rate.

Clausewitz also identifies three determinants which preclude "the clock" from running down uniformly or without interruption. First, fear and indecision create a tendency towards delay and become a retarding force against steady advance. This "moral force of gravity" makes ordinary men move ponderously on the battlefield. Secondly, the imperfection of

human perception and judgement often lead battlefield leaders to deduce that a particular objective or course of action is preferable or advantageous. Since decisions are made on perceptions and not perfect information, selected courses of action are often the same ones deduced and acted upon by the opponent. Thus, a situation is created whereby the third determinant - "combat" - occurs and retards the fluid, non-stop action of "the clock." When two opponents meet in close combat, the ensuing engagement acts like a "ratchet wheel" that acts to stop the works of "the clock" completely.<sup>16</sup> The violent clash of the engagement often retards the attackers momentum and a period of observation begins during which both sides are on the defense. The situation remains stagnant until the stronger willed of the two opponents moves to regain the initiative. For these reasons, Clausewitz believes that combat does not proceed uninterrupted and that action in war is not continuous but rather spasmodic.<sup>17</sup>

Clausewitz also recognizes the impact of an aggressive advance, or high tempo of attack, on the will of the defender to resist. He states that the strength of the defender is proportionate to the active advance of the attacker. "The more the attacker relinquishes his active advance, the less the defender feels threatened and the less he is narrowly confined to resistance by the urgent need for safety."<sup>18</sup> As the attack slows, the situation balances out and the strength of the defense overcomes the momentum of the offense. When the

fighting is finally interrupted, a state of rest and equilibrium results.<sup>19</sup>

There are several important points which must be summarized from this analysis that contribute to an overall explanation of what tempo is and what criteria are necessary for gaining and maintaining it. First, the key inhibitors to continuous operations are fear, indecision and combat.<sup>20</sup> These are the reasons why combat does not progress like the steady rate of a clock. Second, combat is a combination of violent action and relative inactivity. Third, once an attacker relinquishes an active advance, he revitalizes the defender's will to resist. The resurgence of will stems from opportunities presented to the defender which a constant advance would have precluded. To summarize Clausewitz's argument in positive terms, if an attacker can overcome his fear and indecision, avoid direct combat at the enemy's strongest point, and maintain the continuity of advance, then the attacker will overcome the defenders will to resist by threatening his freedom of action.

From Clausewitz, one can therefore deduce that if an attacker can overcome the friction created by his fear and indecision, than he may have the impetus necessary to maintain the continuity of his advance. And if the attacker can maintain the continuity of his advance, then his chances of victory in direct combat increase as the will of the enemy decreases. This decrease in the will to fight is in direct proportion to the defenders perception of his vulnerability. For the purposes of



defining what criteria are necessary for maintaining tempo, one can say that reducing fear and indecision, limiting the enemy's freedom of action, and maintaining the continuity of the attack are key factors in creating and maintaining tempo.

In a more contemporary context, Brigadier Richard E. Simpkin also examines the notion of tempo. He does so in a more direct way, however, by specifically identifying and addressing tempo as a key component of Soviet maneuver warfare theory. In line with his almost exclusive mathematical analysis, he separates and defines tempo into three distinct categories. Overall tempo is "the distance from the initial line of contact to the back of the final objective, divided by the time (in days) from the receipt of orders by the commander to accomplishment or abortion of the mission."<sup>21</sup> He further breaks down overall tempo into *mounting tempo* and *execution tempo*. He defines mounting tempo as the time from the receipt of orders to the time the line of departure is crossed, and execution tempo as the time the operation begins until the final objective is secured.<sup>22</sup> He also identifies seven elements which interact to create tempo to include: physical mobility, tactical rate of advance, quantity of information, command & control, time to complete moves, combat support, and combat service support. All of which are subject to the impact of Clausewitz's friction.<sup>23</sup>

In this regard, Clausewitz's inhibitors to tempo--fear, indecision, and combat--can be seen as antecedents to Simpkin's

elements of tempo. First, Clausewitz believed that fear and indecision are human weaknesses brought on by uncertainty. Simpkin recognizes the inhibiting factors of uncertainty and reinforces the need for good, reliable information as a primary element of tempo. Furthermore, Simpkin also recognizes combat as an inhibitor and breaks it into its component parts in an attempt to identify which elements are key to tempo. The resulting elements include the basic components of combat operations: mobility, advance, command & control, and combat and combat service support.

More significantly, Simpkin recognizes the same relationship that Clausewitz does in identifying the broad features of tempo. In this regard, the symmetry between space and time is key to understanding tempo.<sup>24</sup> Simpkin likens the relationship to the analogy of a golfer's swing before and after striking the ball. As Simpkin sees it, the swing before hitting the ball equates to the mounting tempo of the operation, and the swing after hitting the ball is the follow through or execution tempo. The swing both before and after hitting the ball requires the same amount of time to accomplish and about the same amount of space. Likewise, an operation requires the same amount of time and space to prepare as it does to conduct.<sup>25</sup> In other words, mounting tempo is normally about equal to execution tempo.

Like Clausewitz, Simpkin also identifies those factors that degrade tempo. In short, Simpkin identifies four major inhibiting factors of tempo: bad going, mobility denial, fire

and movement, and paucity or inaccuracy of information. The first, bad going, directly affects physical mobility. Poor terrain, darkness, and even a lack of roads greatly limit the mobility of an attacking force. Linked to this idea is mobility denial which is directly attributable to the obstacle reinforcement of the terrain and roads just mentioned. Additionally, he believes that the fire and movement associated with close combat is an inhibiting factor that impacts tempo adversely in the same way Clausewitz believed it did. Finally, the lack of good intelligence coincides with the uncertainty identified by Clausewitz as another inhibiting factor and impacts mainly on command and control.<sup>26</sup>

Although Simpkin's theory of tempo seems to parallel Clausewitz's, Simpkin extends the analysis to include activities prior to actual combat. Hence, Simpkin's understanding of tempo is a measure of time and space from the line of departure to the final objective, divided by the total time necessary to accomplish or abort the mission. Simpkin's definition of tempo may be shown as a mathematical relationship in the follow terms:

$$\text{TEMPO} = \frac{\text{DISTANCE FROM "A" TO "B"}}{\text{DAYS}} \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{(a measure of distance)} \\ \text{(a measure of time)} \end{array}$$

In its purest form, Simpkin's definition of tempo is really a rate determined by the total distance gained divided by the total time required to plan and move. This is in line with his quantitative approach whereby a unit's tempo is measurable. Given his definition, it would be simple to determine a units' tempo. For example, a unit that attacked through a 15km zone of

action and took 1 day to plan the operation, and 2 days to reach its final objective once across the line of departure, did so at a tempo of 5km/day. What Simpkin omits is the mathematical relation between his formula for determining tempo and the detriments to maintaining it such as bad going and mobility denial. Nor does his formula take into consideration any contributing elements other than the rate of advance and the command and control process.

Although Simpkin's approach is more mathematical, his analysis of tempo includes many of the same components identified by Clausewitz. In addition to these common observations, Simpkin furthers the development of tempo by addressing the importance of mounting tempo. In this regard, Simpkin's most important contribution is the notion that overall tempo depends as much upon the efficiency of command and control activities prior to an operation as it does on actual execution during the operation.

Although Clausewitz and Simpkin both address tempo, the most clearly articulated definition of tempo and the criteria necessary for achieving it comes directly from Soviet officers. Their writings clearly indicate their understanding that "attack at a high tempo has truly become a demand of the times."<sup>27</sup> As Simpkin correctly explained, Soviet doctrine defined tempo in mostly mathematical terms as the average daily advance of troops in the attack. However, contemporary officers of the former Soviet Union write openly about the nature and importance of tempo in more classical rather than analytical terms.

Colonel S. Smirnov provides a very simple yet useful definition in his article on tempo, Fewer Unwarranted Pauses, in which he defines tempo as "the relentless prosecution of an operation," where relentless refers to the continuity of attack.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, Smirnov assesses the prospects of maintaining the continuity of attack in clearly Clausewitzian terms when he states that "unquestionably one cannot picture the continuity of an attack as a continuous and non-stop movement forward."<sup>29</sup> Similarly, he identifies the cause for the decrease in the rate of advance as the need to organize and fight enemy forces.<sup>30</sup> This agrees fully with Clausewitz's notion that combat retards the uniform rate at which combat can progress.

Soviet thought clearly recognized that "tempo is not in itself a goal, but is a means of achieving victory in offensive operations."<sup>31</sup> To achieve this goal, the Soviets recognized that a high tempo in the attack is impossible without well organized reconnaissance and that reconnaissance must be active and continuous under all conditions to ensure commanders do not make unsubstantiated decisions.<sup>32</sup> "It is precisely reconnaissance that will help the commander to make the correct selection," and provide him with the information necessary to maintain a high tempo.<sup>33</sup> The information that reconnaissance can provide and which is essential to maintaining tempo includes where and in what condition is the enemy, what is the enemy planning, how is the enemy organized, and what and where are the enemy's obstacles.<sup>34</sup> In short, "reconnaissance permits

commanders to take the initiative and impose their will on the enemy."<sup>35</sup>

Although newly introduced to U.S. Army doctrine, the American military has recognized tempo as an important element of offensive operations and in particular as a key element of the Soviet war machine. In an effort to disrupt the tempo of possible Soviet offensive operations, numerous military thinkers in the west have attempted to define tempo and identify ways to counter or disrupt it. The result has been a focus on command and control and on how to more efficiently plan for the employment of forces. Central to this effort is a recognition that the time available to plan and execute combat operations has been reduced significantly. The new challenge on the battlefield is to be able to act within the "corresponding time cycle of the enemy."<sup>36</sup> In this regard, the U.S. approach has focused on being able to plan operations and execute them within the time sequence required by the Soviets. The concept was based on the simple assumption that by the time the slower opponent reacted, the faster reacting side would have already decided upon and executed some other course of action. With each cycle, the slower opponent's action would be inappropriate by a wider and wider margin. The initiative would remain with the side that planned and executed the fastest over a period of time.<sup>37</sup> Based on the premise that acting faster would provide a marked advantage, one officer defined tempo as the "flexibility and agility of action which can develop and accrue

advantage upon advantage."<sup>38</sup> Gaining this advantage would then provide commanders and staffs the means to outpace the opponents decision cycle, prevent enemy countermeasures, and influence future operations.<sup>39</sup> Thus, operating with more flexibility and agility, or at a higher tempo, would generate confusion and disorder within the enemy and force him off his own tempo.

As evidenced in the preceding analysis, there is no one agreed upon definition of tempo. However, there are similarities in the characteristics ascribed to the concept of tempo. Based on these similarities, the following definition has been derived to provide a point of reference for the remainder of this paper:

**TEMPO:** *The relentless prosecution of offensive operations which seeks to minimize the impeding affects of combat by ensuring the attackers flexibility while limiting the enemy's freedom of action. It is often dependent on an ability to plan and execute operations quicker than the enemy.*

In addition to this definition, there are five criteria which are necessary for gaining and maintaining tempo. Like the definition of tempo, these criteria have been derived from the preceding analysis and include the following:

1. Reducing Uncertainty. Reducing the amount of uncertainty to an acceptable level allows commanders to make reasonable tactical decisions more quickly and overcome the "moral force of gravity."

2. Limiting the enemy's freedom of action. Depriving the enemy of the opportunity to maneuver freely allows the attacker to maintain his tempo. This also includes precluding the defender from taking the initiative or from using his reserves.

3. Retaining freedom of action. The attacker must retain the freedom of action to capitalize on opportunities and to have the flexibility and agility to influence the action to his benefit.

4. Avoiding direct combat. The retarding affects of direct combat slow the continuity of the attack. Time, resources and energy are expended fighting through strong enemy defensive positions.

5. Deciding and acting more quickly than the enemy. Sizing up the situation and acting decisively makes the enemy's plan meaningless if the attacker is able to act quicker and set the terms of the battle.

These are the criteria necessary for gaining and maintaining tempo. If the contributions of a reconnaissance in force meet these criteria, then the reconnaissance in force may be a primary contributor to tempo. The next section focuses on the reconnaissance in force and how its employment may contribute to achieving these criteria.



### III. Reconnaissance in Force Doctrine

A high tempo in the attack is possible only on condition of a well organized, active and continuous reconnaissance. And so it should be given the first say before pronouncing with full responsibility, "I have decided."<sup>40</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel V. Lisovskiy

The importance of reconnaissance to offensive operations is well documented. As the above quotation indicates, the Soviets fully recognized the primary importance of well organized and aggressive reconnaissance to maintaining a high tempo in offensive operations. However, the linkage between reconnaissance and a high tempo of operations is less developed in U.S Army doctrine. Unlike the Soviets, who have developed a very sophisticated means of employing reconnaissance units and missions, U.S. Army doctrine does not specifically delineate the means for achieving tempo. Understanding the origins of the reconnaissance in force and its development over time will provide a better framework for examining whether U.S doctrine has been too narrowly focused and whether it can be adapted as a specific means for facilitating tempo. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to closely analyze the reconnaissance in force mission as a tactical means for achieving tempo in offensive operations. To accomplish this end, the section will trace the development of the reconnaissance in force mission from both the U.S. and Soviet perspective and compare U.S and Soviet employment of the reconnaissance in force mission.

As stated earlier, FM 100-5, Operations, first included reconnaissance in force as a doctrinal mission in the 1939 version. Since the 1930s, the Army has revised FM 100-5 ten times (to include the latest preliminary draft dated August 1992). Each manual has defined reconnaissance in force, explained its purpose, and highlighted its limitations.

From 1939 through 1949, virtually no changes in the reconnaissance in force were made to Operations. The reconnaissance in force mission was defined as a local attack with a limited objective that was to be employed when enemy resistance could not be swept aside and the situation was uncertain. If air reconnaissance and the advance guard could not locate the enemy's main defenses, then lead troops would be reinforced and a reconnaissance in force conducted to drive in the enemy's outpost line, seize key terrain for employment of the force, and permit observation of the enemy's positions.<sup>41</sup> The 1941 version of Operations was the first to address the limitations and risks associated with conducting a reconnaissance in force by warning that employment of this operation may disclose the overall intent of the operation and that it could bring on a general engagement.<sup>42</sup>

The 1949 and 1954 manuals included changes that continued to refine the reconnaissance in force mission. Most significant was the idea that the force should organize and posture itself to exploit the possible success of a reconnaissance in force.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, the 1954 manual expanded the scope

of the mission. Instead of providing reinforcements to units already forward of the main body, the reconnaissance in force mission was now expanded to include employment of the entire unit, dependent on the situation.<sup>44</sup>

A significant, but short lived change emerged in the 1962 manual which drastically altered the definition and purpose of the reconnaissance in force mission. For the first time since the 1939 manual, a marked difference appeared defining the operation. The reconnaissance in force was no longer defined as a local attack with limited objectives, but was now expanded and defined as a "*highly mobile operation consisting of an attack by all or a sizeable portion of a force for the purpose of discovering and testing the enemy's strength, composition, and disposition.*"<sup>45</sup> The manual also stated that the reconnaissance in force was particularly adaptable to the modern battlefield and would serve as the basis for many offensive operations.<sup>46</sup> Although the 1962 doctrine was a reflection of the impact of nuclear weapons on the tactical battlefield, changes to the reconnaissance in force were applicable to the conventional battlefield as well. This definition came closest to matching the definition and purpose of the Soviet reconnaissance in force mission, but unfortunately, it did not survive the impact the Vietnam war had on the Army's doctrine.

Not only did the 1968 version of FM 100-5, Operations, revert back to the terms set for reconnaissance in force in 1954, it put even more limitations on when and how to employ the

operation. In 1968, the reconnaissance in force mission was again described in terms of a limited objective operation. However, it went further and cautioned that a reconnaissance in force "may produce unacceptable losses," in addition to disclosing the commanders intent and provoking a general engagement. Furthermore, it argued that a reconnaissance in force mission might not be worth the risk involved. Presenting a nuclear capable enemy with such a profitable target as a large unit conducting a reconnaissance in force would not be worth the information gained.<sup>47</sup> Significantly, FM 100-5 no longer defined the operation as a mobile operation upon which to base offensive operations. A final note on the 1968 manual; it expanded the traditional mission to include probing actions as a means for conducting reconnaissance in force operations across a broad front to determine the enemy situation at selected points. Nevertheless, the idea that the reconnaissance in force was a means of producing fluid operations on the modern battlefield passed away quickly and the traditional definition returned.

The decline of the doctrinal role of the reconnaissance in force mission continued and it lapsed into almost total obscurity in the 1976 edition of FM 100-5. In this edition of Operations, reconnaissance in force was combined with raids, diversions, feints, and demonstrations, and categorized as one of the "other offensive operations." This category included one general description which categorized all of these "other

operations" as limited objective, limited scale, or specially designed operations which follow the general guidelines set for hasty and deliberate attacks.<sup>48</sup> No other definitions or guidelines addressed the reconnaissance in force. With the exception of the one general notation covering all limited objective operations, the reconnaissance in force mission virtually disappeared from FM 100-5.

The emergence of AirLand Battle doctrine in 1982, and the subsequent edition of FM 100-5 in 1986, saw a reintroduced of the reconnaissance in force mission as a viable and important mission. Similar to the 1962 manual, the 1982 version of Operations emphasized the importance of the reconnaissance in force mission. Although reconnaissance in force was still described as a limited objective attack, the manual now stated that "the reconnaissance in force might be the *primary* source for determining the enemy's strength, disposition, weapons, and intentions."<sup>49</sup> FM 100-5 also recognized the increased potential of improved electronic sensors, but maintained that advances in technology complemented rather than substituted tactical intelligence gathering means.<sup>50</sup> Unlike the 1962 manual, however, the first edition of the Army's Airland Battle doctrine still cautioned the commander of the risks involved in conducting a reconnaissance in force.

The latest version of FM 100-5, Operations, continues to define reconnaissance in force as a limited objective attack. But unlike earlier doctrine, it describes the mission as a means

for developing the situation into a major operation if an exploitable weakness is found.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, the Army's emerging doctrine states that tempo is characterized by attacking forces that move fast and follow reconnaissance forces or probes through gaps in enemy defenses to exploit the tactical situation.<sup>52</sup> By definition, one purpose of a reconnaissance in force is to find these gaps. Although the manual loosely associates tempo and reconnaissance in force through this mutual emphasis on finding gaps in the enemy's defenses, Operations does not define the reconnaissance in force as a highly mobile operation (as did the 1962 version), and does not make the specific link between reconnaissance in force and tempo.

Since World War II, Soviet tactical doctrine has emphasized reconnaissance as an important element in maintaining the tempo in the offense. As evidence of this priority, the Soviets unified their reconnaissance and intelligence efforts into one concept, *Razvedka* (the Russian word for reconnaissance). This concept specifies how *Razvedka* units are assigned tasks and responsibilities for determining enemy strengths and weaknesses, gaining information about terrain and obstacles, and conducting limited objective combat operations.<sup>53</sup> *Razvedka* units are organized at all levels below army and conduct aggressive reconnaissance and limited combat operations by avoiding enemy strong points and exploiting gaps in the enemy's defense.<sup>54</sup>

As an integral part of this complex system, Soviets doctrine prescribes the employment of forward detachments to facilitate

the relentless, sustained, forward movement of attacking forces. The forward detachment serves a critical role in tactical maneuver by maintaining the tempo of the advance and serving as the link between deep attack forces and less mobile follow-on forces.<sup>55</sup> As General P. Simchemko states, "an important role in the achievement of high offensive tempo [is] played by forward detachments by their daring and enterprising operations and skillful envelopment of strong points."<sup>56</sup>

The forward detachment is a combined arms force that operates independent of the main body and is given either a force or terrain oriented objective. In accomplishing its mission, the forward detachment has great flexibility to change the axis of advance if the enemy situation warrants.<sup>57</sup> The forward detachment differs fundamentally from other Razvedka forces operating in advance of the main body since it performs a combat function while other "advance" forces perform security functions.<sup>58</sup> The forward detachment may be committed to accomplish one or more missions to include: conduct reconnaissance in force, fix an enemy force, seize terrain to facilitate rapid movement of the main body, and conduct raids on key facilities.<sup>59</sup> These rapidly executed and flexible missions allow forward detachments to fragment enemy forces, overcome enemy defensive positions, and destroy the equilibrium of the enemy's reserves.<sup>60</sup> When conducting a reconnaissance in force, therefore, the forward detachment performs one of the more important roles of Razvedka by obtaining "reconnaissance information about the enemy by means of combat actions."<sup>61</sup>

This is fundamentally different from other Razvedka units which perform security missions rather than combat missions.

There are numerous similarities and differences in U.S. and Soviet doctrine. First, there is a strong correlation between the reconnaissance in force and the mission of the forward detachment. The reconnaissance in force is a limited objective attack to test enemy dispositions and to exploit the situation, if possible. Similarly, the forward detachment conducts combat operations which include limited objective attacks to disclose enemy dispositions, fix enemy forces, and seize key terrain. In essence, the purpose of a reconnaissance in force in U.S. doctrine is similar to the purpose of a forward detachment in Soviet doctrine. Both operate independently from the main body to perform combat operations in lieu of security operations. Their main role is to conduct limited objective attacks to determine the disposition and intent of enemy forces or to seize key terrain necessary for the rapid advance of the main body.

There are also numerous differences in the two doctrines. Soviet forward detachments are specifically employed to create an exploitable situation whereas U.S. reconnaissance in force operations are exploited only if the situation allows it. Although both the reconnaissance in force and the forward detachment have very similar missions, the Soviet forward detachment is proactive and seeks to create and maintain tempo while the U.S. reconnaissance in force is more reactive. As the following historical examples will show, proactive measures ensure the tempo of operations while reactive measures decrease tempo and forfeit the initiative.



#### IV. Historical Review

The following historical examples serve to illustrate how the U.S. Army and the Soviet Army have conducted reconnaissance in force operations. In the Soviet case, the examination will consider forward detachments as de facto reconnaissance in force since the operation falls within the definition of reconnaissance in force previously described. These examples have been selected because each operation consists of a corps size unit employing regimental or brigade size formations in the reconnaissance in force role or as forward detachments and because they best represent the way in which each army fights the reconnaissance in force. Each historical example will be outlined and then analyzed using the criteria derived from the initial survey of tempo. From this review, a determination will be made as to whether or not the reconnaissance in force contributes to tempo and what doctrinal implications the analysis may have.

An example of a U.S. corps level reconnaissance in force is the VII Corps reconnaissance in force conducted in early September 1944. The operation provides a good case study for examining whether or not the reconnaissance in force as understood and practiced by the American Army can be used as a means for maintaining tempo in the attack.

As allied pursuit across France ground to a halt in early September, 1944, the U.S. First Army commander, Lieutenant

General Courtney H. Hodges faced a dilemma. His forces had reached their culminating point just short of the German border. The First Army no longer had the logistical means to continue the broad advance that it had conducted previously and it would take four days of resupply before it would be ready to resume the attack.<sup>62</sup> Even after the resupply, the Army would only be able to logistically support itself for another five days before it would require another extensive resupply effort.<sup>63</sup> Hodges had two options. First, he could halt the First Army's advance and conduct resupply operations in preparation for a continued advance across the Army's front. Or second, he could focus his effort and continue to attack on a limited basis. Hodges decided to take the first option and halt the Army's advance. In addition to this directive, he ordered local reconnaissance to determine enemy dispositions in the Army's zone.<sup>64</sup>

The VII Corps Commander, Major General J. Lawton Collins voiced his strong concern that the "slowed pace" of the advance would allow German defenders the opportunity to reorganize their weak defenses and strengthen their positions while U.S forces would lose the momentum of the attack.<sup>65</sup> At this point, it is important to note the disposition of the German Army facing the First Army. Since Falaise, the German Seventh Army had been ineffective as a coherent command and control headquarters. In the first week of September, the Seventh Army was reconstituted and in position to resume control of forces in the field. It was in the middle of this transition as First Army closed in on

the West Wall. Facing the VII Corps was the German LXXXI Corps which was also assuming control of various units in its new area of operations.<sup>66</sup> Specifically, LXXXI Corps had under its control the 9th Panzer Division and 116th Panzer Division. These two units comprised the core of the LXXXI Corps which also had control of numerous provisional units to include the 353d Infantry Division.<sup>67</sup> These units were in the process of regrouping and establishing firm command ties with the newly constituted Seventh Army as VII Corps approached the German border.<sup>68</sup>

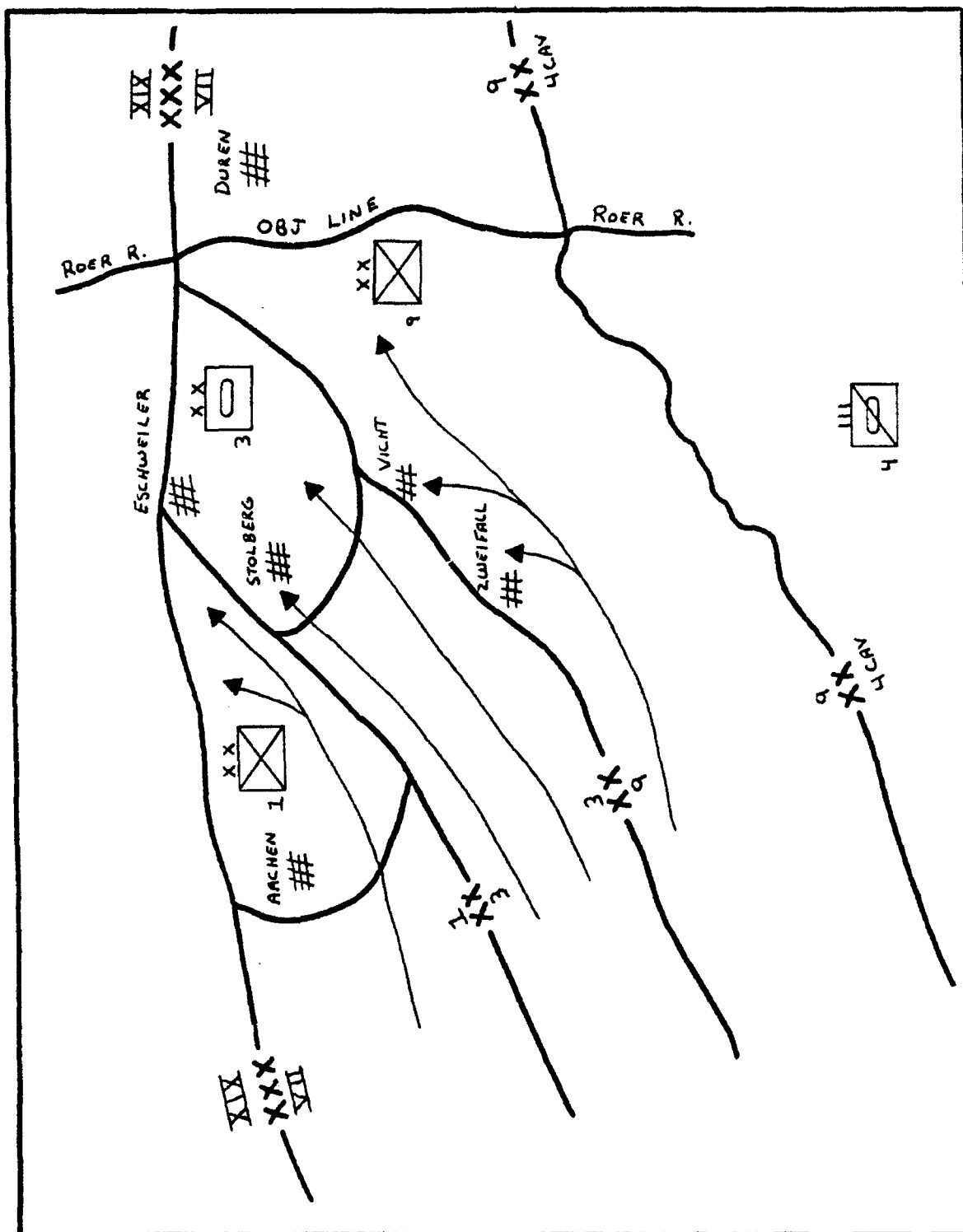
To capitalize on the enemy's disarray, Collins requested permission to conduct a reconnaissance in force to penetrate the weak German border as far as possible, disrupt enemy defensive preparations, and to maintain the momentum of his advance.<sup>69</sup> Given Collins' strong concern over slowing the pace and the enemy's disorganized position, Hodges approved Collins' request, but placed strong limitations on the risk the First Army would accept. If VII Corps was not successful in making a quick penetration, then the operation would be aborted and logistical resupply would be conducted for the full four days prior to any further offensive operations.<sup>70</sup>

Collins chose to commit the bulk of VII Corps to the reconnaissance in force. The concept of the operation was to conduct a limited attack to penetrate the enemy's defenses in the Aachen-Stolberg corridor area and develop the situation for possible exploitation by forces that would be logistically resupplied by the time the reconnaissance in force had developed

the situation.<sup>71</sup> The attack would preclude enemy forces from strengthening their defenses and prevent enemy spoiling attacks prior to the time VII Corps and First Army were ready to continue the advance in earnest.

VII Corps planned to attack with three divisions abreast with the corps cavalry protecting the right flank (See Map 1, p. 30). On the left, 1st Infantry Division's mission was to attack to seize the high ground and key road junctions northeast of Aachen. The 1st Infantry Division was to avoid street fighting in the town of Aachen because of the intense effort and time required to seize built up areas. In the center, 3d Armored Division's mission was to penetrate the enemy's defenses, destroy enemy forces, and seize key terrain in the vicinity of Eschweiler. On the right, the 9th Infantry Division was to attack to penetrate enemy defenses and seize key road centers near Duren. Ninth Infantry Division also had the mission to protect the 3d Armored Division's right flank. Accordingly, it also had the mission of attacking to secure the towns of Zweifall and Vicht. Protecting the VII Corps right flank, the 4th Cavalry Group was directed to maintain contact with the 9th Infantry Division.<sup>72</sup>

Collins' guidance to his subordinate commanders was very strict. He directed that 1st Infantry Division attack with two infantry regiments abreast, and that 3d Armored Division attack with two combat commands. Furthermore, each of the regiments was to lead with no more than a battalion.<sup>73</sup> If the defenses



Map 1 - VII Corps Operations Overlay<sup>74</sup>

were easily breached, Collins' intent was to seize Aachen and the Stolberg corridor, a high speed avenue which avoids the thick forests of the Eifel.<sup>75</sup> The 3d Armored Division would then exploit the high speed avenue and attack to the east to seize terrain necessary for the continued advance of VII Corps. If all went as planned, the reconnaissance in force would maintain the pressure on the weak German defenders long enough to enable the remainder of the Corps time to resupply and continue the attack. The attack was set for the morning of 12 September 1944.<sup>76</sup>

Although Collins' intent for ordering a corps reconnaissance was to maintain the tempo of his advance, the operation failed to achieve the desired results. Instead of breaking through the initial defenses, both the 1st Infantry Division and the 3d Armored Division were slowed by roadblocks, difficult terrain, and enemy resistance.<sup>77</sup> This precluded VII Corps from achieving its initial objectives in the vicinity of Aachen and Eschweiler. VII Corps was then unable to seize the open terrain along the Stolberg corridor necessary for a rapid advance on the Roer River and objectives further to the east.<sup>78</sup>

The initial attack did, however, provide further information on enemy defenses which Collins used to alter the Corps plan significantly.<sup>79</sup> Based on the updated situation, Collins decided to narrow his zone of attack, bypass Aachen, and limit the Corps' advance to the west bank of the Roer River.<sup>80</sup> At this point, the reconnaissance in force had been completed.

Collins, however, chose to continue the operation under the guise of a reconnaissance in force for 24 additional hours.<sup>81</sup>

While analyzing the operation, it is important to understand that Collins's intent for conducting a reconnaissance in force operation was to maintain relentless prosecution of his advance. He was concerned about the slowed pace of his advance and he wanted to maintain the tempo of his operations. By continuing to conduct limited offensive action against the enemy, he believed that he could buy time for his corps to recuperate from its logistical shortfalls, while precluding the enemy from reinforcing the strong defensive fortifications of the West Wall already in place in his zone of action. The reconnaissance in force that VII Corps conducted was in line with the traditional U.S. concept for employment. It consisted of a series of limited attacks to determine the dispositions, compositions, and locations of enemy units and to seize key terrain for the continuation of future operations. It is important to note that the reconnaissance in force was commenced after the forward advance of VII Corps had already halted. In the case of VII Corps, the manner in which the reconnaissance in force was conducted failed to limit the enemy's freedom of action, limited the VII Corps' freedom of action, attacked the enemy's strength, and allowed the enemy time to prepare for the attack. Although it did provide essential information on the enemy useful for future operations, VII Corps' operation failed to achieve four to the five criteria necessary for gaining and maintaining the tempo.

Reducing uncertainty allows commanders the opportunity to make more informed decisions. VII Corps reconnaissance achieved this end. Prior to executing the reconnaissance in force, Collins believed that enemy defenses would not be sufficiently developed to stop his advance on the Roer River if he pushed his forces and maintained the tempo of the attack. The reconnaissance in force disproved Collins' notion and provided the VII Corps Commander with the correct assessment of the German will to resist and the enemy's intentions. Based on this new information gained on the first day, Collins was able to more accurately assess his situation and adjust his plan appropriately.

The timing of VII Corps attack, however, did not limit the enemy's freedom of action. Because the operation commenced after the initial advance had already halted, the enemy had time to reestablish its positions, reconstitute its reserves, and prepare for the continuation of VII Corps' attack. This lapse in pressure enable the Germans to establish a strong defense in Aachen, which prior to the operation was only lightly defended. Failure to seize the town at the outset of the reconnaissance in force enabled the enemy the freedom of action to reinforce the town.

On the other hand, committing the Corps to a reconnaissance was Collins' attempt to retain the initiative and his freedom of action. However, by committing the entire force to the operation with no large force in position to exploit, Collins limited his own freedom of action to local success.



Most notably, VII Corps' reconnaissance in force did not seek to avoid contact with the enemy, it sought to seize locations upon which the enemy was firmly emplaced. Instead of seeking gaps in the enemy's defenses, VII Corps' operation quickly degenerated into a frontal assault of the West Wall defenses.

In deciding to conduct a reconnaissance in force, Collins failed to act quicker than the Germans. By the time he committed VII Corps to the operation, the Germans had already reestablished their defenses. Had he better anticipated the situation in advance, he may have been able to keep the enemy off balance with a smaller force while he resupplied the remainder of the Corps. This example typifies the U.S. Army's traditional use of reconnaissance in force. Albeit the operation provided information useful for planning future operations, it failed to maintain the tempo of current operations.

In contrast to VII Corps' reconnaissance in force, "Operation Bagration" offers a good example of how the Soviets used forward detachments in the reconnaissance in force role to maintain tempo in offensive operations. Launched in June 1944 (just several weeks before VII Corps' attack on the West Wall), "Operation Bagration" involved four army groups attacking abreast across the entire eastern front. The operational plan was designed to breach German defenses in six widely separated sectors and conduct broad encirclements of the German Army. As part of this operation, the 3d and 1st Byelorussian Army Groups were responsible for conducting a pincer movement towards Minsk

to cut off the German Fourth Army and destroy it.<sup>82</sup> As a major unit in the 3d Byelorussian Army Group, the III Guards Mechanized Corps, commanded by Lieutenant General Victor T. Obukhov, played a decisive role.<sup>83</sup>

For the operation, the III Guards Mechanized Corps, augmented with the III Guards Cavalry Corps, would exploit a penetration in the German lines created by the Fifth Army.<sup>84</sup> As the Fifth Army reached the Luchesa River, the III Guards Mechanized Corps would advance on Bougushevsk and would be responsible for seizing crossing sites over the Berezina River south of Lake Palik.<sup>85</sup> General Obukhov's concept of the operation was to attack along two axes of advance (See Map 2, p. 36). On the right column, the 9th Guards Mechanized Brigade would attack followed by the 7th Guards Mechanized Brigade. On the left, the 8th Guards Mechanized Brigade would attack as the main effort followed by the 35th Guards Tank Brigade. Finally, each first echelon brigade would be responsible for providing a forward detachment along their respective axis.<sup>86</sup>

After an extensive artillery barrage, Fifth Army attacked on the afternoon of 22 June 1944 . The Army assaulted across a broad front with three corps abreast to destroy German forces in zone and to seize crossing sites over the Luchesa River.<sup>87</sup> By the afternoon of 23 June, Fifth Army was close to achieving its objectives and the III Guards Mechanized Corps was alerted for possible commitment.<sup>88</sup> Based on situation reports and the recommendations of field commanders of the Fifth Army, the 3d Army Group commander, Colonel General Chernyakhovskiy, committed



the III Guards Mechanized Corps at 1000 on 24 June and it began to move promptly at 1100. As he issued the order to Obukhov, the 3d Army Group commander reiterated his intent that the Corps should not slow its advance to engage in combat with enemy defenders, but should maintain the tempo of the attack and move rapidly to the enemy's rear area.<sup>90</sup>

Initial commitment of the Corps was delayed by jammed roads with units of the forward corps and by confusion at the crossing sites. Numerous units of the Fifth Army had moved onto routes designated for use by the III Guards Mechanized Corps and crossing sites were therefore unavailable. After Fifth Army shifted several units to different crossing sites, the III Guards Mechanized Corps finally was able to complete its forward passage and the Corps' lead units made first contact with the enemy at 2100 hours on 24 June.<sup>91</sup>

On the left axis, the 8th Guards Mechanized Brigade made its passage and went into the attack. The brigade was preceded by a forward detachment which soon made heavy contact with fierce German resistance near the town of Kichino. The forward detachment was unable to mass its armor and the attack to seize the town failed. Although the remainder of the 8th Guards Mechanized Brigade was able to attack and seize the town during the night, the tempo of the attack along the left axis had slackened.<sup>92</sup>

Progress on the Corps' right axis of advance was significantly more favorable. The forward detachment of the 9th Guards Mechanized Brigade identified a gap in the German

defenses and the entire brigade poured through it.<sup>93</sup> By exploiting the gap, the 9th Guards Mechanized Brigade departed from the original axis which the Corps Commander had approved. However, the change in direction presented a new opportunity to seize the key town of Senno from the north.<sup>94</sup> Enveloping the German position at Senno would provide an opportunity to quickly overcome the German defenses along the right axis and transition the attack into an exploitation and pursuit. General Obukhov believed that if the brigade could successfully accomplish the envelopment, it could establish the conditions for the "successful outcome of the entire operation".<sup>95</sup>

The forward detachment of the 9th Guards Mechanized Brigade continued its rapid movement and by early morning of 25 June, had led the brigade on a wide envelopment to Senno.<sup>96</sup> Since Senno was originally along the 8th Guards Mechanized Brigades axis of advance, the shift in axis by the 9th Guards Mechanized Brigade not only forced the main effort to change to the 9th Brigade, but also caused the 8th Guards Mechanized Brigade to shift to a secondary axis of advance.<sup>97</sup>

The forward detachment of the 9th Guards Mechanized Brigade played an integral role in seizing Senno. Reinforced by tanks of the 45th Guards Tank Regiment, two batteries of the 1823d Self-Propelled Assault Gun Regiment, and the brigade's artillery battalion, the forward detachment was able to surprise the enemy defenders who believed the attack would not commence until the main body had arrived.<sup>98</sup>

The unexpectedly early seizure of Senno had a marked impact on German resistance along both axes. German resistance decreased and the III Guards Mechanized Corps Commander was presented with an opportunity to increase the tempo of the attack.<sup>99</sup> Carefully analyzing the army group commander's intent and closely studying his own situation, General Obukhov quickly decided that he should exploit the enemy's situation. Without delay, he ordered the 7th Guards Mechanized Brigade, which had been following the 9th Guards Mechanized Brigade, to come on line with the 8th and 9th brigades and attack towards the town of Lukoml. The 35th Guards Tank Brigade was retained as the Corps reserve and continued to follow the 8th Guards Mechanized Brigade.<sup>100</sup>

As a result of the increased tempo of the III Guards Mechanized Corps, the 3d Army Group commander altered the Corps' mission. Instead of continuing on the same axis of advance south and southwest, III Guards Mechanized Brigade was ordered to advance due west in order to seize crossing sites over the Berezina River north of Lake Palik instead of south of it.<sup>101</sup> III Guards Mechanized Corps continued its rapid advance and successfully accomplished the mission. The change in mission was a direct result of the increased offensive tempo of the Corps, and the increased tempo was created in large part by the contributions of the forward detachments in achieving the criteria necessary for gaining and maintaining tempo.

As the exploiting force in "Operation Bagration", Obukhov

intended to move as rapidly as possible and to avoid direct combat with strong enemy defensive positions. To meet this demanding challenge, he directed his lead brigades to commit forward detachments along each of the Corps' two axes of advance. The forward detachments were responsible for reconnoitering the axes, determining the enemy's disposition, and attacking limited objectives necessary for the deployment of the main body. By definition, forward detachments of the 9th Guards Mechanized Brigade and the 8th Guards Mechanized Brigade conducted their operations as reconnaissance in force missions. Obukhov's use of the forward detachment as reconnaissance in force was a significant factor in his ability to maintain and even to increase the tempo of his attack.

An analysis of the operation shows that, in every respect, the reconnaissance in force conducted by the forward detachments met the criteria set forth in Section II for gaining and maintaining tempo. The employment of forward detachments greatly reduced the amount of uncertainty upon which Obukhov made his decisions. Along both axes of advance, the reconnaissance effort of each forward detachment provided the intelligence Obukhov needed to adjust his plan and to avoid heavy enemy resistance. Obukhov's ability to change the axis of advance of the 9th Guards Mechanized Brigade to envelop Senno was a direct result of his knowing the situation along the 9th Brigade's axis of advance as well as the 8th Brigade's axis. By decreasing the uncertainty, the Corps Commander was able to make

a timely and informed decision which Obukhov stated had a decisive impact on the entire operation. The result of less uncertainty was an increase in offensive tempo which changed the complexion of the entire operation.

The early attack on Senno by the forward detachment had a marked impact on the German's freedom of action as well as the Soviet's freedom of action. Once the forward detachment of the 9th Guard Mechanized Brigade had attacked and seized Senno, the German defenders had no choice but to withdraw from all subsequent positions which depended on Senno as a major part of the defensive plan. Conversely, the success the Soviets enjoyed by seizing Senno with a forward detachment provided numerous opportunities to the Corps Commander. Ultimately, General Obukhov decided to shift axis and the main effort to the 9th Brigade to maintain the momentum of his attack and to quicken his tempo.

Avoiding direct combat with heavily defended German positions is another benefit the use of forward detachments in the reconnaissance in force role provided the III Guards Mechanized Corps. This, more than any other factor, created the conditions for the ultimate success of the Corps. As the 9th Guard Mechanized Brigade moved along its axis, the forward detachment found a gap in the German defenses which the entire brigade was able to exploit. Subsequently, the brigade was able to move on and attack the key town of Senno. Had the forward detachment not found the gap, the Corps would have had to fight



through strong German defenses to seize Senno, and the Corps would not have been able to increase the tempo of the attack as it did with the commitment of the 7th Guards Mechanized Brigade.

In committing the 7th Guards Mechanized Brigade, General Obukhov developed the situation quickly and acted decisively in order to get his plan into action before any enemy plans could be developed and executed. Through decisive action, the Corps Commander set the terms of battle and increased the tempo of attack by committing an additional brigade to the attack.

The success of III Guards Mechanized Corps presented the Army Group Commander an opportunity to modify the operational plan and seize crossing sites over the Berezina River ahead of schedule. More than any other factor, the increased tempo of operations created by the use of forward detachments in the reconnaissance in force role provided this opportunity to the Soviet forces. Significantly different than VII Corps, III Guards Mechanized Corps employed their forward detachments during the operation to find gaps in the German defenses, conduct limited objective attacks, and seize key terrain. Ultimately, this contributed to a high tempo operation which created the conditions for decisive results.

## V. Conclusions

As derived from the initial survey of classical and contemporary theorists in section II, tempo is the relentless prosecution of offensive operations which seeks to minimize the impeding effects of combat by ensuring the attacker's flexibility while limiting the enemy's freedom of action. To maintain tempo, a force must decrease the amount of uncertainty through aggressive reconnaissance and intelligence gathering means, keep the enemy off balance, retain freedom of action, avoid contact at the enemy's strongest points, and decide and act more quickly than the enemy.

As evidenced by the operations of the VII Corps and the III Guards Mechanized Corps, the reconnaissance in force has had varying results in meeting the criteria necessary for achieving tempo. With regards to the U.S. approach, the doctrine does not reinforce the potential of reconnaissance in force as a means for gaining or maintaining tempo. The historical trend has been for doctrine to emphasize the risks involved in conducting a reconnaissance in force instead of reinforcing the positive potential. VII Corps' reconnaissance in force of the German West Wall in September 1944 illustrates the results when a reconnaissance in force is employed after the forward advance of an attack has ended. Although key information may be obtained for planning and executing future operations, it does not necessarily maintain the tempo of current operations.

In comparison, Soviet doctrine calls for the aggressive employment of Razvedka units to assist in gaining and maintaining the tempo of the attack. To accomplish this critical function, forward detachments conduct combat operations independent of the main body. One role of the forward detachment is as a reconnaissance in force. As the actions of the III Guards Mechanized Corps illustrate, forward detachments, performing in a reconnaissance in force role, may provide the means necessary for achieving a high tempo of offensive operations if committed during the advance and before the attack stalls.

Employed during an attack, reconnaissance in force can maintain tempo by bridging the gap in time between major actions during offensive operations. By providing the commander a tool with which to keep pressure on the enemy, the reconnaissance in force denies the enemy freedom of action while providing the attacker the information upon which to base further offensive action. Thus, the reconnaissance in force is a combat mission which enables the attacker to retain the initiative and a high tempo of operations.

As currently written in the Army's emerging doctrine, the reconnaissance in force retains many of the elements outlined in the 1939 version of FM 100-5. However, the latest version of FM 100-5, Operations, also states that a reconnaissance in force "may develop into a major offensive operation if [it] discloses an exploitable weakness in the enemy's defenses."<sup>102</sup> As

evidenced by the forward detachment of the 9th Guards Mechanized Brigade, a reconnaissance in force can determine the outcome of an operation if it sets the appropriate conditions for success. Operation Bagration illustrates how reconnaissance in force contributed to the overall success by creating an opportunity for the III Guards Mechanized Corps Commander to increase the tempo of the attack.

At this juncture, the Army's emerging doctrine in FM 100-5, has set the stage for close consideration of the reconnaissance in force mission as a possible means for gaining and maintaining a high tempo in offensive operations. Since a reconnaissance in force may produce the prerequisite criteria necessary for creating and maintaining tempo in mobile operations, the doctrine should be expanded to reinforce reconnaissance in force as a contributor to tempo *during* offensive operations.

Unlike Ned Russell's statement introducing this paper, reconnaissance in force is not "...a term used to minimize the disappointment over the failure of an attack."<sup>103</sup> On the contrary, a reconnaissance in force is a viable means for maintaining the relentless prosecution of offensive operations. Accordingly, additional refinement of its doctrinal definition and more emphasis on it during training and in the classroom may make the reconnaissance in force a premier choice of commanders in the field as a means for gaining and maintaining tempo.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ned Russell, Springboard to Berlin (1943), quoted by Jay M. Shafritz, Words on War (New York: Prentice Hall, 1990), 344.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5, Operations - Preliminary Draft, (Washington: Department of the Army, 1992), 9-2.

<sup>3</sup>Although the Soviet Union no longer exists, their doctrine remains in use within many armies who for so long were aligned with and surrogates of the Soviets. Accordingly, this paper will refer to the Soviets in the present tense to recognize the enduring value of their doctrine.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 9-5.

<sup>5</sup>Final Exercise Reports (FXR 88-1 through FXR 92-6), Battle Command Training Program, Combined Arms Command, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 9-2.

<sup>7</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5-1, Operational Terms and Graphics, (Washington: 21 October 1985), 1-60.

<sup>8</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington: Department of the Army, 1986), 113.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>10</sup>Ferdinand O. Miksche, Attack: A Study of Blitzkrieg Tactics (New York: Random House, 1942), 7.

<sup>11</sup>FM 100-5 (1992), 9-5.

<sup>12</sup>The American Heritage Dictionary, 1976 ed., s.v. "Tempo."

<sup>13</sup>Carl von Clausewitz, On War, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 207.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 513.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 221.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 217.

<sup>21</sup>Richard E. Simpkin, Race to the Swift (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1985), 107.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 106.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 107.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 109.

<sup>27</sup>Colonel General G. Salmanov, "High Attack Tempo is a Demand of the Times," (Voyenny Vestnik, No. 12, 1977, p. 62), quoted by Kelley E. Bennett, "The Tempo of the Attack - Key to Victory (Garmisch, Germany: US Army Russian Institute, 1981), 4.

<sup>28</sup>Kelley E. Bennett, "The Tempo of the Attack - Key to Victory," (Garmisch, Germany: US Army Russian Institute, 1981), 4.

<sup>29</sup>Colonel S. Smilnov, "A Little Fewer Unwarranted Pauses," in Military Herald, No. 9 (Moscow, "Krasnaya Zvezda" Publishing House, 1977), 91.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Bennett, "The Tempo of the Offensive," 5.

<sup>32</sup>Lt. Col. V. Lisovski, "The First Word is Reconnaissance," (Military Herald, No. 3, 1977) quoted in Kelley E. Bennett, "The Tempo of the Offensive - Key to Victory," (Garmisch, Germany: US Russian Institute, 1981

<sup>33</sup>Colonel G. Lobachev, "High Rate of Offensive - A "Sine Qua Non" for Victory," Military Herald, No. 2 (Moscow: Krasnaya Zvezda Publishing House, 1977).

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 72.

<sup>35</sup>Lsisoskiy, "First Word to Reconnaissance," 83.

<sup>36</sup>Colonel Thomas E. White, Jr., "Disrupting the Tempo of

Soviet Operations," Military Review, November 1987, 4.

<sup>37</sup>William S. Lind, Maneuver Warfare Handbook (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985), 5.

<sup>38</sup>White, "Disrupting the Tempo," 5.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>Lisovski, "First Word to Reconnaissance," 88.

<sup>41</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5, Field Service Regulations - Operations (Washington: Department of the Army, 1939), 51.

<sup>42</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5, Field Service Regulations - Operations (Washington: Department of the Army, 1941), 45.

<sup>43</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington: Department of the Army, 1949), 37.

<sup>44</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington: Department of the Army, 1954), 53.

<sup>45</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington: Department of the Army, 1962), 71.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington: Department of the Army, 1968), 4-12.

<sup>48</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington: Department of the Army, 1976), 4-12.

<sup>49</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington: Department of the Army, 1982), 8-5.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>FM 100-5, Operations (1992), 9-2.

<sup>52</sup>FM 100-5 (1992), 9-5.

<sup>53</sup>Frederick R. Kienle, "Reconnaissance-Pull" - Seeking the Path of least Resistance, School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph, 1991, 20.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup>David M. Glantz, "Spearhead of the Attack: The Role of

the Forward Detachment in Tactical Maneuver," Soviet Army Studies Office, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1988, 2.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>57</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-2-1, The Soviet Army (Washington: Department of the Army, 1990), 4-38.

<sup>58</sup>Glantz, "Spearhead of the Attack," 3.

<sup>59</sup>Richard H. Gribling, "Soviet Attack Tempo: The Linchpin in Soviet Maneuver Doctrine," School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph, 1988, 22.

<sup>60</sup>Glantz, "Spearhead of the Attack," 40.

<sup>61</sup>David M. Glantz, "The Fundamentals of Soviet Razvedka," Soviet Army Studies Office, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1989, 25.

<sup>62</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-15-1 (Draft), Corps Operations Tactics and Techniques (Washington: Department of the Army, 1991), 21-3.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>J. Lawton Collins, Lightning Joe (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisianan Press, 1979), 267.

<sup>66</sup>Lucian Heichler, "The Germans Opposite VII Corps in September 1944," Research Section, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington D.C., 1952, 4.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>69</sup>Collins, Lightning Joe, 267.

<sup>70</sup>FM 100-15-1, 21-4.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Charles B. MacDonald, "Operations of VII Corps in September 1944," Office of Military History, Department of the



Army, Washington, 1953, 3.

<sup>74</sup>FM 100-15-1, 21-5.

<sup>75</sup>MacDonald, "Operations of VII Corps," 3.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Collins, Lightning Joe, 267.

<sup>81</sup>MacDonald, "Operations of VII Corps," 267.

<sup>82</sup>Studies on Soviet Combat Performance (Historical Evaluation and Research Organization [HERO], Dunn Loring, Virginia, 1977), 44.

<sup>83</sup>HERO, 47.

<sup>84</sup>HERO, 51.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 52.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 56.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 59.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 60.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 61 - 62.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 64.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 64.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 64.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 74.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 64.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>102</sup>FM 100-5 (1992), 9-2.

<sup>103</sup>Russell, Springboard to Berlin, 344.

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